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A BREACH OF PROMISE.

To succour female loveliness in distress has ever been the duty, not merely of the stage-hero, who to hurried music leaps over the raking pieces, broadsword in hand and pistols in belt, but I would fain think, of the world generally—an employment grateful to the stalwart arm, an ambition always throbbing in the manly bosom. England, Home, and Beauty, according to the late Mr Braham, constituted the great principles for which Lord Nelson and the British fleet fought and conquered at Trafalgar. And yet it must be owned that the battling for charming woman has often proved itself to be a service attended with more than its apparent dangers. The giant may be routed, and the damsel rescued, but then, O valorous knight, comes your greater peril! No Jack-o'-lantern ever betrayed traveller into quagmire more than bright eyes have led lovers to grief. The giant defeated, how subdue the damsel? for she will smile thanks through her tears, and be, O so gracious and gentle, and then drying her eyes, will rise up and gradually win, bind, enslave, and finally reduce her gallant deliverer to a position of extreme ignominy and distress.

Softer music than this should properly, perhaps, usher in my heroine; yet a flourish of trumpets is no unfitting accompaniment to the entrance of a conqueror—and had she not conquered me? and was I not walking in the rear of her car, bearing my fetters with what grace I could, and trying to make-believe that they were silken, and that I liked them? She was beautiful, of course. The woman who is loved is always a paragon of loveliness to her lover; and as every woman is loved by some one at some period of her life, how consolatory this reflection would be to women, if they would only, Mohammed-like, be satisfied when the one disciple had been secured; for I think it has been decided at last that there really are some—one or two, say—plain women in the world. For instance, I have always opposed the notion that Miss Griffin can be considered attractive-looking; yet Boldman, who is engaged to her, declares confidently that she is possessed of a remarkable and peculiar character of beauty, such as you don't often see in women. For one, I rejoice in its rarity; but still it is comfortable for the honest couple that the lover is of that way of thinking. But I wander from my topic. That little Polly Smith was pretty, no one could deny; even after you had picked her to pieces, as the ladies call it, there remained a very sufficient balance of attractions. Say that she was chubby; that her face was as broad as it was long; that her nose was rather out of proportion to her cheeks (espe-

cially upon a profile view, when it certainly seemed rather outbid by its neighbours), and that what there was of it had a pronouncedly upward tendency; grant that she lisped—make all these deductions, and yet see what a number of pleasant items still remained: eyes of most amazing size and blueness, with such lashes sheltering them above!—lips of cherry-red—teeth like a double line of pearls tightly strung, complexion—But there, is it fair, is it decent, to be giving this absurd catalogue raisonné of my Polly's charms? Only, having set out at length her weak points, it seems but honest to turn to the other side of the ledger, and relate her advantages.

I should state that my first introduction to Polly Smith arose from my succouring her in her hour of distress. The scene was in the back drawing-room of my good friend *Père Smith*'s snug house in Camden Town. Polly was suffering acutely from a long-division sum imposed upon her by Miss Pinkney the governess—a good, active, indefatigable little woman, with perhaps just a slight tendency to keep the pupil nose over-tightly at instruction's grindstone—prone to think it sometimes a salutary thing to withhold aid from the struggling student, as though it were beneficial to impart the art of swimming by permitting the learner to half drown himself as a commencement. If questioned on the subject, Miss Pinkney—a nice person, but with just a *souvenir* too much lemon in her mixing—answered simply and shortly, that it was her *system*, and that she had never found it fail; which, if not convincing, was almost as good, for it stopped all further discussion of the subject. Poor Polly, then, was, at my first meeting her, the victim of Miss Pinkney's no doubt admirable system of education. She was plunged in an arithmetical thicket, and the more she moved about and endeavoured to release herself, the further she seemed to become entangled. She had lost all clue to escape from her dreadful position; she was quite in despair, and weeping bitterly. She was dishevelled in attire; her stocking was down at heel like a stage Hamlet's; her beautiful thick flaxen hair had burst all restraint, and tumbled about face, and neck, and shoulders with utter recklessness—I notice that hair always seems to uncomb, and unconfine, and ruffle itself in emotional situations—great tears hung on as long as they could to her beautiful eyelashes, and then dropped, tired out, on to her slate; this seemed to barter slate-pencil dust in exchange, which mixing with the tears, was transferred plentifully to Polly's face, imparting rather a daubed and miry aspect to that otherwise most charming object. Her grief was touching—too much so. Stirred by the inherent chivalry of my nature, I flew to her rescue. Little

Miss Pinkney's back was turned (rather a hard, straight, pinched-looking back it was); I took Polly's slate from her soiled hands—how her blue eyes lightened up as I did so!—I ran through the host of figures assembled on the slate; I noted the difficult task set in Miss Pinkney's neat angular figures at the top, and attempted to be wrought out in poor Polly's graceless and straggling hieroglyphs; I found how an early flaw had leavened all Polly's efforts with error; I worked out the sum; I set her right—I accomplished Miss Pinkney's task. ‘Some one has helped you,’ remarked that instructress, when she saw the slate subsequently, and she looked at me with some acidity, it must be owned. ‘You’re a naughty girl—there, that will do. Mind it doesn’t happen again.’ I know the little lady longed to administer to me a lecture on the subject of her system, and my infamous interference with it; but she remembered, perhaps, my intimacy with the parent Smiths, and thought it more judicious to endure rather than resent my behaviour. As for Polly, I had quite unlocked the way to her heart—all traces of sorrow and slate-pencil were soon removed from her face, and she came and kissed me lovingly. I should mention that she was at this time exactly seven years of age; and I—well, I was a very old friend of her father’s.

That the good understanding established between Polly and myself should ultimately ripen into warmer feeling, as the romance-writers phrase it, can surely surprise no one. But I am not a one-act performance, I am not a knight-errant of a single piece of chivalry only; I toiled for Polly’s cause on another occasion, if anything rather more distressing to her, even than Miss Pinkney’s task.

Polly’s personal possessions were very limited; they might almost be said to consist entirely of house-property, being, in fact, one house—a doll’s-house—which unreasonable wear and tear had reduced to a quite untenable and extremely dilapidated condition. The furniture, owing to a series of violent accidents and extraordinary experiments in carpentry carried on in the nursery, was represented by a curious collection of fragments, which it would take a great deal of glue and ingenuity to have put together again, in anything approaching to correctness. I don’t know whether an untidy little plot of ground, portioned out in the neglected enclosure at the back of Smith’s house, and generally recognised as ‘Polly’s garden,’ could be considered in the light of her real estate. But probably her chief possession was a wax-doll of considerable proportions, rather staring and vacuous in expression, but otherwise very rosy, and flaxen, and pretty, and not much unlike Polly herself. There were certain peculiarities about the doll of a character difficult to recognise, as consistent with ordinary nature. Why it had arms of bright-blue kid, being, as to face and neck, decidedly of a fair and delicate complexion, I never could clearly understand; and an unhappy tendency to keep its feet painfully inturned, after the manner of Mr Grimaldi and clowns generally, really evidenced some organic deficiency in construction, which, perhaps, not even careful bringing up had been able altogether to eradicate. Now Polly set a very high value upon this doll, which, indeed, throughout the household, was known as Miss Hannette. Severed from Miss Hannette for certain hours of the day by the interposition of Miss Pinkney and her system, Polly hastened with singular alacrity to rejoin her young companion at the close of the scholastic labours, and laboured to console Hannette for the period of separation, passed by that young lady in full-length silent solitude on the sofa-cushions in the front drawing-room, as though she were lying in state in her best clothes, like a dead general. Now, one day, an accident of a most alarming nature befell Miss Hannette; owing to some singular cause, never precisely ascertained, one of her lovely blue eyes disappeared altogether! A black and

horrible chasm marked the spot formerly occupied by that brilliant orbit; and where had it gone? It had not fallen out, that was quite clear, for, horrible thought, if you gave Miss Hannette ever so gentle a shake, *you could hear distinctly the loose eye rattling inside her skull.* And how to recover it? how to restore beauty so fearfully marred? Polly, in an agony of grief, bore along to me the body of the unfortunate Hannette; the afflicted invalid was laid in my arms, while poor little Polly wrung her hands, and dishevelled her hair, and big tears stood glistening in her eyes, making them seem diamonds in a glass-case. I endeavoured to soothe the violent grief of Polly, and to remedy the phenomenal disorder of Hannette. But I perceived at once it was a case demanding extreme care and deliberation. I determined at length to begin with a simple operation, reserving a more complicated performance for the event of my first effort failing. With a piece of whipcord formed into a loop, and inserted into the cavity, I endeavoured literally to fish for and secure the fugitive eye. Polly hung upon my endeavours with a vivid anxiety, ejaculating various ‘Oh’s’ and ‘Aha’s’ as the different stages of the operation seemed to promise failure or success. For some time I pursued this mode of treatment, but, I regret to say, without success. Père Smith had been rather a heartless and indifferent spectator of our trouble, and at last fairly laughed out at my discomfiture.

‘Try the cork-screw,’ he said roughly.

‘O papa, be quiet,’ cried Polly, deeply shocked at such ill-timed levity. ‘Don’t laugh; it’s too dreadful.’

It really began to be a very serious business.

‘I must perform a surgical operation, then,’ I said, and began to look for my penknife.

‘Hadn’t Polly better leave the room?’ suggested Smith, shamefully amused, it must be owned.

‘No, no; let me stay: I’ll be *so* good.’

‘And you won’t cry out? Not even “Oh!” or “Ah!”’

Polly faithfully promised that she would not do anything so improper, and began to hold both her hands tightly over her mouth, to prevent any involuntary utterance.

I regret to be obliged to relate details necessarily painful, but I promise to be as brief as possible. With my penknife I performed upon Miss Hannette’s head the operation of scalping; I next cut away portion of the skull, which appeared to be made of a *papier-mâché* material, coated with wax. Through the opening thus effected, which formed, in fact, a sort of trap-door, I was enabled to regain the eye; and soon afterwards, by means of glue judiciously applied, to fix it in its right position. A little brown paper and more glue restored the skull and the—in point of fact—wig to their former state; in fine, the operation was completed, and successfully. Hannette had resumed her wonted calm and rather indifferent aspect—the black chasm was again charmingly tenanted by the sparkling blue eye. Polly was in a state of rapturous delight.

‘Now, then, Poll, kiss the doctor, by way of fee, and thank him for all his kindness,’ said Père Smith.

‘That I will,’ responded Polly, and put her little arms tightly round my neck, and presented me with a most unmistakable kiss.

‘Will you marry me, Polly dear?’ I asked.

‘Yes, I will,’ she answered with unaffected earnestness.

‘Take her, you dog!’ interrupted Père Smith, jocularly imitating the manner of an old gentleman I have seen now and then in a farce. ‘I’ll settle five thousand pounds upon her. Bless you, my children. Be happy; and he joined our hands, laughing strangely over a ceremony that should have been impressive.

‘But you must wait till I’m bigger,’ Polly continued, as though she began to be alarmed at the step she had taken.

'Yes, he must wait till you're as tall as mamma,' said Smith.

'Oh, I shall never be as tall as mamma.' (Mamma, a very sweet woman, was precisely four feet eight inches in height.) 'Shall I ever? Do you really think so?'

I told her that if she was very good indeed, there was a reasonable chance of it; but I don't think she quite believed me.

And so Polly Smith and I were engaged.

For a considerable time, I am bound to admit, I had no fault whatever to find with Polly's conduct in regard to the peculiar relations existing between us; it quite seemed that I occupied the foremost place in her affections, and that she took pains to make this pre-eminence evident to me. Whenever I paid visits to her father's house, I was sure of a cordial welcome from Polly; if from a window she saw me advancing, she would hurry to the door, to be the first to greet me, and she would proffer no undemonstrative affection, would be satisfied with nothing under most decided kisses. When, with her brothers and sisters, she trooped into the dining-room to dessert, she would always claim, as a matter of right, to sit next to her affianced husband—who was not backward in his attentions, let it be said; who plied her plentifully with the pleasant dessert spread out on her father's mahogany; who arranged for eating in a dexterous and agreeable manner her oranges, even turning the rind to account, and fashioning from it all sorts of fantastic handiwork, including carvings of pigs and other interesting animals; who furtively furnished her with pockets full of almonds and raisins for private consumption, after the withdrawal of the ladies from the dining-room. And did not presents pass between the engaged couple? Has not the present writer still in his possession an elaborate ornamental book-marker, composed of perforated card and cherry-coloured ribbon, with the word 'Affection' neatly worked upon it; also a handsome pair of Berlin wool-slipper, with fox-heads on the toes, glass-beads vividly depicting the eyes of the vermin (I think that mamma assisted a little in that achievement, though Polly *was* so proud of it). And did not little Polly, too, receive various little tokens of affection from her devoted slave and admirer?—a handsome skipping-rope, a set of elegant battledores and shuttlecocks, and a perambulator for Miss Hennette, in which vehicle that interesting puppet was daily taken airings, the operation she had recently undergone having, it was conjectured, left her health in rather a delicate condition.

But certainly a change came at length over Polly and my love's young dream. The remark became current throughout the Smith family that Polly was growing very sharp: it was quite possible that the advantages of Miss Pinkney's system were rapidly developing themselves. I cannot help thinking that that preceptress had never forgiven my interference with her labours, and had treacherously, and by way of revenge, instigated Polly, fresh from Magnall, to test my deficiencies by an adroit system of cross-examination, with a view to my annoyance and discomfiture. Polly began to care no more for the caricatures I drew for her, to disregard my humorous observations, to turn a deaf ear to my narratives from fairy history. She was bent upon gauging my acquaintance with Magnall. Now, in the course of my studies, it had been my fortune to meet with various books, but never with the work of that famous questioner; so that when Polly strove to gauge my learning by a variety of interrogations, and demanded that I should answer in the precise words of Magnall, I must admit I failed altogether. If I attempted an explanation of the inquiry in any terms of my own, I was turned back ruthlessly. Miss Pinkney required from Polly the replies verbatim of Magnall, and Polly in turn insisted upon my rendering the same to her. When Polly asked me to give the particulars

of the battles of Marathon, Thermopylae, Artemisium, Salamis, Platea, Erymedon, Arginusse, Leuctra, Trebia, Issus, Thrasymene, Canne, Zama, &c.; or to describe the funeral ceremonies observed by the Athenians; or to relate what marks of esteem Polygnotus received from his country; or to describe Petalism; or to give details and the date of the overthrow of the Egyptian monarchy by Cambyses, king of Persia; or to relate the names of the Mexican and Peruvian emperors—how could I possibly make answer in the words of a writer I had never read? It was unreasonable, of course, that such answers should be required of me; but my inability to give them was a serious blow to my engagement with Polly. I think she underrated my abilities and attainments from that moment; she told me somewhat contemptuously that even little Freddy knew a great deal more of Magnall than I did. I believe she rated me thenceforward as a confirmed and hopeless dunce, and was of opinion that a disastrous intellectual disparity existed between us; nevertheless, there was not as yet any avowed breach in the understanding that linked us to each other. This was to come.

One night there was a juvenile party at the Smiths. A conjuror exhibited in the back drawing-room, whose sleight-of-hand was very much better than his grammar. There was dancing afterwards; there was incessant negus, and a prolonged supper. Many very nice children made their first acquaintance with indigestion on that evening. Polly looked very pretty indeed on the occasion: her hair was neatly smoothed and confined with pink ribbons; she wore a white tarlatan dress with a pink sash, coral necklace, kid gloves, silk stockings, and white satin shoes. I am not sure, however, that she did not look prettier when she had her hair tumbled, and the slate-pencil dust decorated her face as she combated with that fatal long-division sum; but her cheeks were very rosy, and her eyes very bright. She certainly was enjoying herself greatly. We danced the first quadrille together, as was of course expected of us, being an engaged couple, after which I went to assist Pere Smith in the amusement of a number of small children whose education was not sufficiently advanced to permit of their joining in the dance. When I next saw Polly, I found her deep in conversation with a very clean little gentleman, with large brown eyes, a black velvet tunic decorated with cut steel buttons, lemon-kid gloves, a blue necktie, white trousers, and pumps. A hateful rival had crossed my path! I believe that to be the correct way, according to the novels, in which a lover should speak of his opponent. He was certainly a very skilful dancer, though he was smaller and younger than Polly, and had a pleasant flow of conversation. He was describing to the young lady in detail a visit he had that morning paid to the dentist, and even exhibited to her the cavity in his gums resulting from the removal of a tooth. Polly's sympathies were keenly roused, and she was evidently deeply interested in her new young friend. He was an attractive-looking, bright, lithe little man, and I should have liked a romp with him, if the wounded state of my feelings in regard to Polly would have permitted it. They afterwards pulled crackers together, and sat next each other at supper, and having concluded that repast, placed their arms round each other's waists with an air of delightful abstraction. It was evident I was completely forgotten. I was betrayed—undone. Polly had jilted me!

Soon afterwards, she came tripping up.

'Oh, if you please, would you mind very much if—I did not marry you?'

'Why, Polly, what does this mean?'

'Well, you see, I've been thinking it over, and talking to Master Barsby, and he says, and I agree with him, that—that you're rather too old, and too tall; and then, you know, he wants me to marry him,

he does; and he's such a nice boy; and his papa's going to give him a pony, and he says I may ride it if I like, and he'll take care I don't fall off; and he's going to give me half his Noah's ark, and his bat, trap, and ball. You're not cross with me, are you?"

"Is that Master Barsby in the black velvet doublet?"

"Yes; and his name's Bob; and he's kissed me under the mistletoe, and he says he likes me much better than you do, and that he hates you. I told him that was very wicked of him, you know; and he's given me all the sugar-plums he got off the Christmas-tree, all but the almond rock, because he's very fond of that. You're sure you're not cross with me, dear?"

"No, Polly, pet. Give me a kiss: it's all over then; and now Miss Pinkney is very kindly performing another polka. Little Bob is looking for you everywhere; go and dance with him, and make him happy. Our engagement is at an end. Good-bye, my darling!"

With an odd look of doubt and wonder, and with certain misgivings, I do believe, as to the correctness of her conduct, little Polly left me to dance a polka with Master Barsby, in the enchantments of which dance, however, all remorse was soon disposed of.

So little Polly broke her promise.

I was thinking drearily over the matter on the following day at the club—a club is a horrid, gloomy, selfish, bachelor sort of business after all—when I encountered that arch-gossip Leake. He was looking for a newspaper as usual—he is always looking for newspapers, that man; I believe he does it to hear what's going on at all the different tables. I could not refrain from speaking to him.

"Leake, my dear fellow," I said in a hollow whisper, "if you hear any report that I am engaged to a Miss Mary Ann Smith of Camden Town, contradict it, will you? There's nothing in it."

"My dear boy, I'll be sure to," answered Leake fervidly.

And the next day I find a story going the round of the club, setting forth that I have been jilted in a shameful way by an old maiden lady, residing at Highgate, and enormously rich!

O you naughty little Polly, this all arose from your breach of promise!

SAVOY.

SINCE the world has been officially informed that *La belle France* cannot sleep securely beside rejuvenated Italy unless she becomes mistress of the cradle of the Sardinian monarchy, the poor and rugged territory so designated has become an object of some interest. By a turn of the political wheel, Savoy—commonly associated in metropolitan minds with Mr Albert Smith, the organ nuisance, dismal hurdy-gurdies, miserable monkeys, and forlorn white mice—has suddenly become the subject of Machiavelian circulars, Helvetian protests, fierce parliamentary orations, brilliant leaders, canards and contradictions. For this elevation into temporary importance, the province is indebted more to the accident of position than either its extent, fertility, wealth, or population. Divided by the Cottian Alps and the Rhone from France, separated by the Graian and Pennine chain from Piedmont, it geographically belongs rather to Switzerland than to either. It measures but ninety-two miles from north to south, and sixty-six from east to west; but within these narrow limits, it boasts the grandest scenery in Europe. Within its boundaries are found the most gigantic glaciers, the wildest passes, the loftiest mountain-peaks of the whole Alpine range. Mont Blanc, Mont Cenis, Mont Iséran, Mont Valaison, Mont Granier, and Mont St Bernard, tower above the Savoyard valleys, whose cultivated slopes, cheerful *châlets*, and sparkling streams, contrast delightfully with the gloomy pine-forests, and

the frowning rocks and icy glaciers of the snow-clad Alps.

The climate is much colder than that of Piedmont; and the cultivation of the vine, so common in the latter country, in Savoy is necessarily confined to a few of the lower valleys. The extent of arable land in the province is so limited, that although its fields produce wheat, oats, barley, and rye, the supply of cereals is so far below the wants of the inhabitants, that the poorer classes are compelled to find a substitute in chestnuts, of which they make a sort of bread, which requires to be broken with a hammer. The possession of some good pastureage enables the Savoyards to export a reasonable quantity of cattle, cheese, butter, tanned skins, and wool.

The province is divided into seven districts—Chambery, Annecy, Upper Savoy, Maurienne, Tarantaise, Faucongy, and Chablais—containing altogether an area of 4197 square miles, and a population of 581,833. The language spoken by the Savoyards is a *patois* bearing a faint resemblance to French. The education of the people being left entirely to the clergy, only one-half of them are able to read or write, and but twenty-eight in a hundred are masters of both accomplishments. They are a simple, honest, good-natured, affectionate race, that seem to have been left in the rear of the march of improvement. If M. Galette is to be believed, the better classes among them are improvident, and so little inclined to meet their liabilities, that they would rather spend a hundred pounds in feasting a creditor than pay him five pounds of a debt. From the barrenness of the country, the little agricultural knowledge brought to its cultivation, and the custom of dividing and subdividing the land, even the sparse population fail to find occupation. Every autumn, an extensive migration of the youth of the province takes place. The young Savoyards or Savoisiens—as they prefer to call themselves, in defiance of philological laws—leave their poverty-stricken Alpine homes, to seek employment in Paris, and the principal towns of France, as shoeblocks, *commissionnaire*, chimney-sweeps, and itinerant musicians. With the spring, the young adventurers turn their steps homewards, to gladden their parents with their scanty savings, and to help them in the labours of the field, until the approach of autumn bids them again set out on their travels. Even when serfdom was an institution of the country, and every serf leaving it was liable to severe punishment, for 'stealing himself,' there was a constant stream of immigrants into Dauphiné. Upon the abolition of serfdom, the people were forbidden to leave Savoy, on pain of death, but what patriotism failed to check, fear was powerless to prevent.

Chambery, the capital—in the twelfth century, an open village, defended by a moated castle—is now an irregularly built town, containing 15,000 inhabitants. The old Gothic cathedral, whose walls were once decorated with the devices of the knightly competitors at the great tournament of 1348, has, thanks to the pious care of the brethren of the White Friars—to whom the charge of the cathedral has been committed—been purified of such worldly vanities. The old emblems of love and chivalry have long since been hidden by a thick coating of whitewash. In the Abbey of Haute Combe, the burial-place of many generations of the princely House of Savoy, lie the remains of Peter, Earl of Richmond, and Boniface, Archbishop of Canterbury (the two uncles of our Henry III.'s queen, Eleanor), whose misdoings in England so excited the indignation of Matthew Paris. The Verney, the favourite promenade of the citizens of Chambery, suffered no little from the utilizations of the French during their occupation of the province. To make room for some ugly barracks, they entirely destroyed the ancient *Jardin de l'Arquebusé*, the scene of the annual trial of skill at shooting the popinjay. The best marksman having been crowned king, was

privileged to choose a partner during the festivities from a 'rose' of half-a-dozen maidens, selected by the grave burgher-council of the city—from the ranks of trade, if his popinjay majesty chanced to be of noble degree; from the beauties of the aristocracy, if he were of untitled race. When the Duke Victor Amadeus himself carried off the prize, the judges could not decide from which class the queen was to be elected, and sought to throw the onus upon the duke by choosing two 'roses,' one noble, one plebeian; but Amadeus avoided offending either of the rival parties by taking the hand of the pretty daughter of a lawyer, who could not strictly be included in one or the other section. Chambery, dull as it is, besides its convents, hospitals, and modest manufactories of silk gauze, lace, soap, and hats, boasts its royal college, its academy of science, its society of agriculture and commerce, its theatre, its public library, and its school for drawing. Nor has it failed to produce some men of mark—the Abbé de St Réal, Vangelas, Albanis, Beaumont, Berengier, Berger, and Joseph de Maistre, were natives of Chambery, twenty miles south of which is Rousseau's hermitage, 'Les Charmettes.'

After the breaking up of the Roman empire, Savoy for two centuries was alternately governed by French kings and Burgundian dukes, until it became absorbed in the German empire. Humbert of the White Hands, who, by his ability and courage, had risen from obscurity to be Lieutenant of the Marches, under Conrad the Salic, was the founder of the fortunate House of Savoy. During the absence of the emperor, the Bishop of Savoy declared himself independent. Humbert marched against him, defeated him, and razed his city to the ground. For this service he was created Sovereign Count of Savoy. His successors, by purchase, marriage, intrigue, and force of arms, gradually extended their authority, till, in the fifteenth century, the dominions of the Dukes of Savoy extended from the shores of the Lake of Geneva to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the banks of the Rhone to those of the Sesia. Spite of his avowed neutrality, Duke Charles III. saw Savoy devastated in turn by French, Swiss, and Imperialists, during the wars between Louis XII. and the Holy League, Francis I. and Sforza, and Francis and the Emperor Charles. To punish the Prince of Savoy for attending the coronation of the latter, the French monarch advanced into Piedmont; and at the death of Charles III., in 1553, Vercelli, Nice, Aosta, and Cuneo were the only places unoccupied by Francis. Philibert, the successor to the ducal crown, possessed great military talents, and after defeating the French at St Quentin and Gravelines, concluded peace, married their king's daughter, and added Oneglia and Tenda to his recovered patrimony. Louis XIV. declared war against Victor Amadeus II., and harassed his dominions till the peace of Ryswick. In the war of the Spanish Succession, the policy of the duke was ever changing, and his armies fighting alternately on either side. He finally ranged himself against France, and with his kinsman, Prince Eugene, defeated the French before Turin, bringing the war to a conclusion, and gaining for himself the Valsesia, Lomellina, the isle of Sicily, with the title of king—subsequently exchanged for the island and crown of Sardinia. Charles Emmanuel, the second king, espousing the cause of Maria Theresa, Piedmont and Savoy were invaded again and again by the armies of France and Spain, which were, however, eventually driven out; and the treaty of Aix-la-chapelle added the Upper Novarese, Voghera, and Vigevano, to the Sardinian monarchy. Savoy was now left for some years unmolested, but fell one of the first victims to the French Revolution. In 1792, the Directory declared war against Sardinia; the republican army entered Savoy almost unresisted, took possession of the capital, and overran the valleys as far as Mont Cenis. A Jacobin club was established

at Chambery, which despatched its most active members as missionaries 'armed with the torch of reason and liberty, for the purpose of enlightening the Savoyards on their regeneration and prescriptive rights.' A convention was next formed, and a deputation sent to Paris, offering to incorporate Savoy with the republic one and indivisible. The proposition was eagerly accepted by the National Assembly as being the fulfilment of the law of nature by which Savoy was clearly intended to form part of France. It accordingly was transformed into the department of Mont Blanc. Four years afterwards, the rapid success of Bonaparte compelled the king of Sardinia to purchase peace by the formal cession of Savoy, Nice, and the whole of Piedmont from the Mont St Bernard to Roccabonne, near Genoa. In 1814, Savoy was the scene of some desperate battles between the French and Austrians; and in the following year it was, by the treaty of Vienna, once more restored to its old masters.

It is scarcely to be wondered at if the Savoyards look with complacency upon the diplomatic tactics employed to unite their province bodily with the French empire. Physically shut out from Italy, the barrier between Savoy and France is more imaginary than real; and the narrow Guier, which forms the actual boundary, is spanned by the Pont Beauvoisin. Each end of the bridge is guarded respectively by a Piedmontese and a French soldier—the former to search every one crossing the stream, that French goods may not be introduced into Savoy free of duty, and the latter to do the same kind office for the produce of the province. Half the lives of the people are spent in attending to the irritating formalities of the customs, from which annoyance annexation of course would relieve them. The French language, too, is the language of society; and the annual visits of the young Savoyards to France naturally foster a kindly feeling towards their powerful neighbour. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that the Savoyards are content to transfer their allegiance, even at the cost of exchanging constitutional freedom for imperial despotism.

S N A K E S I H A V E M E T.

If there is anything in the world of which I entertain a deep-rooted hatred and an uncontrollable dread, that object undoubtedly is a snake, and next to a snake, anything in the shape of a lizard, scorpion, toad, or other reptile; nevertheless, it seems to have been decreed that from my earliest infancy upwards, I should be doomed to be exposed to perpetual encounters and adventures with these loathsome creepers upon the earth. The first clear, tangible object that fixed itself upon my memory—I could have been very little more than two years old at the time of the occurrence—was a hideous cobra coiling itself under the pillow of my Indian nurse, who slept on a mat on the floor; and the first word I could distinctly articulate was 'Pamboo' (tamul-snake), with which cry, and pointing with my finger, I drew attention to the unwelcome intruder, and forthwith got him despatched. Then a long blank intervenes, reaching over nearly three years; after which, my adventures may be termed legion. The next incident relating to reptiles which I can recall to mind is connected with my brother Bill—who was older than myself—and a small white scorpion. Bill had been trying to unlock a large padlock on the fowl-house; and being unsuccessful, poked his little finger into the keyhole, and immediately, to my immense astonishment and amusement, performed a most extraordinary dance round the yard, accompanying the same by the most hideous howls, contortions, and grimaces. But I had no idea at the moment, of course, that he had been stung by a venomous reptile.

One very heavy monsoon at Madras, when the rain

had swollen the river to such an extent that it flooded the country for miles around, I was standing in the billiard-room surveying the dreary aspect out of the windows, when my attention was suddenly arrested by the moribund groans of a frog, and turning round, I saw a huge snake under the billiard-table in the very act of engorging it. Sliding in at the opposite door was Mrs Cobra and her young family, driving before them some wretched little frogs, which were vainly endeavouring to escape from their relentless pursuers. One bound on to the billiard-table, and another off it, and into the veranda, cleared me of my disagreeable neighbours; but, before nightfall that day, twenty-seven snakes of all descriptions and sizes were killed in that billiard-room by the servants. The waters rose so high that every house in Madras suffered from a perfect visitation of reptiles, and not only reptiles, but jackals and birds, sought an asylum in the homes of men, with bandicoots, rats, scorpions—in short, sufficient reptile material to fit a very decent museum of natural history.

I was sitting in a traveller's bungalow once at a place called Ootagerry, between Madras and the Malabar coast, and my friend was sitting near the door, so as to catch as much daylight as possible, reading some work from the little library with which government and voluntary contributions furnish those bungalows. Suddenly, I perceived that a large snake had coiled itself round the back of his chair, and was poking its head between his arm and his body, as though seeking for some other hold. For a moment, I was paralysed, and the next the snake had shifted its search, and was rapidly coiling round the young officer's neck. At the same instant, a servant made his appearance opposite the door, and got so frightened, that he fell to the ground in a fainting-fit. My friend was luckily a man of immense nerve and great presence of mind; he saw at a glance that his only chance was to remain as still as a statue; the slightest move would have alarmed the snake, and then nothing could have saved him. I, on my part, sat motionless, with my heart frozen through and through. In a very few seconds, fortunately, the servant and palkee-bearers returned from the *tope*, where they had been having their curry and rice, and the noise of their approach alarmed the snake (then coiled round and round the body of S—) so much, that it unwrapped itself rapidly, and slid as rapidly away to its hole. S— fainted instantly he found himself safe; and my anxiety had been so intense, that I felt ill for many days afterwards. On relating this adventure to Major W—, whom we met at the very next station, he told us one of his own serpent experiences.

'I commanded,' said the major, 'the detachment of foot-artillery stationed in the fort at Masulipatam—a horrid place, as you know, gentlemen, for any Christian to be quartered. Mrs W— was just recovering from a severe illness, and, for the first time for many a day, was able to join me at the tiffin-table. Most fortunately, I was on a garrison court-martial that day, and had my sword hanging by its belt to the chair-back. Our bungalow was a tiled one, with no intervening platform or other roof; and suddenly there dropped upon the table between us an immense cobra, who had been most likely hunting for squirrels' nests amongst the conical tiles. Raising its hooded head, and hissing horribly, the reptile threatened alternately to dart at one or the other of us, its venomous fangs protruding a full inch. As for Mrs W—, she had fallen back in her chair perfectly unconscious; and never for a second removing my eye from the snake's, I gradually unsheathed my sword, and suddenly bounding aside at the same instant, severed its head from its body. It was a hairbreadth escape, I can assure you, for both of us.'

Some time afterwards, I was residing at Chittoor, in North Arcot, and there was a little detached store-

house or *godown*, as they are called, where I kept my supply of beer and other European luxuries. I always kept the key of this place myself, and one morning, as was my wont, went in to get out some articles for the day. The door was the only place of ingress or egress, and the godown, which was thatched with palm-leaves, could not boast of a single window, darkness being a requisite in those hot countries for that kind of store-house. What I required took me to the very further extremity of the room from the door, and I was just stooping down to select what I wanted, when I heard a tremendous flop behind me, and then a scuffle. Turning round, I saw a cobra and a rat having a regular pitched battle. The cobra had been after the rat's young ones, and the infuriated mother was thirsting for revenge. Though much alarmed for my own safety—for I had no means of escape without passing the cobra—I soon became intensely interested in the combat. At first, the rat fought with the greatest caution, hopping from side to side with remarkable agility, and avoiding the poisoned fangs of the cobra; at last, however, the snake—which in the interval had received many severe bites—stung his adversary, and then the rat, apparently aware that its case was now hopeless, grew reckless, and closed in with its opponent. In less than two minutes, it succeeded in killing the snake, and then crawling aside upon some straw, the victor died, apparently in the greatest agonies.

I had another illustration of the enmity existing between rats and snakes, many years afterwards, in Syria. I had sat up late reading a file of the *Times* newspaper; the servants had all been in bed for hours, and when I withdrew to my own, it wanted only a few hours to daylight. As I closed my bedroom door, I was startled by a tussling under the chest of drawers close by, and the next instant a rat darted out, followed by a huge black snake, and these two set to work fighting right against the door. In my alarm, I upset the chair on which I had placed the candle, and found myself at once in utter darkness, locked in with a snake and a ferocious rat. To jump upon my bed was the work of an instant, and loudly did I bellow for assistance out of the window. I might as well have called to the winds to aid me. I had neither match nor weapon of defence save a bolster, and the room was so dark that I could not distinguish my own hand though held close before my nose. When the scuffle ceased, I expected every instant to feel the horrid clammy snake twisting itself round my legs, and in that unenviable anticipation I remained three long hours, till broad daylight relieved me of my fears, and I found both combatants dead before the door.

I have never, in all my experience, found snakes to be the aggressors, unless you get them into a *cul de sac*, or during their period of breeding. Then the cobra is indeed terrible, and I was chased by one at Tellicherry for nearly half an hour, escaping the brute only by doubling quickly round until I stumbled over a stout bamboo, armed with which weapon I soon despatched it. At the best of times, it is nervous work coming to close quarters with the cobra: one false aim, and you are a dead man. People have a notion that the green snake of India—which is certainly a pretty specimen, if anything in the shape of a snake can be pretty—is harmless; I can prove to the contrary. One day I saw a beautiful mango bird dangling from a bough of a bamboo-bush; the glare was intense, and I wore blue spectacles, for which reason, perhaps, I could not well distinguish the cause of the phenomenon, and supposing it to have been trapped by some wile, I seized the bird as a great prize, for I was making a collection to bring home with me. In a second afterwards, the glass of my right-eye spectacle was shattered to pieces, and I hardly recovered from my amazement, when the snake, disappointed of his aim, wriggled off into the

thickest of the bush. The glasses saved my eye and my life, for the poor mango-bird was riddled through and through the head, from one eye to the other, and every atom of brain had been abstracted. They are dainty gentlemen some of these snakes, and I was well acquainted with one that preferred turkeys' eggs for his breakfast to any other. I used to watch my turkeys as they strayed about the grounds, and mark their nests, leaving them undisturbed until they began to sit. One hen had fixed upon a myrtle-bush, round which she used to flutter and scream every day, poking her stupid-looking head out in so strange a fashion, that I was once induced to watch her. No sooner had she deposited her egg, than a cobra made his appearance, and with the greatest dexterity sucked the egg. With greater wisdom than the fabled destroyer of the goose and the golden eggs, the cobra spared the turkey to supply his dainty breakfast.

But if the reader wishes to study the natural history of reptiles to perfection, I recommend him to live a month or two at Bang-kok, in Siam. He will have the satisfaction, when he wakes of a morning, to see a snake peeping out of a hole in each corner of the room, and two or three little ones amusing themselves at hide-and-seek upon the floor. If he looks up at the ceiling, he will perceive a specimen of the lizard tribe, called the *Toquay*—from its peculiar cry—a lizard that looks as if it was afflicted with leprosy, and which has the astonishing faculty of throwing itself ten yards across from one upright wall to another. If he carry his inclination for study still further, he can investigate the mysteries of a Siamese stew, and find alligator the chief ingredient. He will find ample opportunity of collecting out of his soupplate, tea-cup, wine-glass, or the hair of his head, or from off the back of his hand, specimens of the mosquito-fly, ant, green-bug, grasshopper-bug, vulgus, earwig, flea, in all the diversified branches of each genus. Nor when the fatigues of day are over, and he dons his slippers for ease and comfort, need he be surprised to find a scorpion in one, and a centipede in the other, while a colony of white ants are investigating the merits of literature in his book-case.

R E P O R T I N G .

GREAT as has been the general glorification of our Fourth Estate, and Palladium of British Liberty as the Press is acknowledged to be, the human machinery (for after all it is *but* human) by which this great Power works is as little known to the public at large, as the green-room of the theatre they frequent, or as the lady or gentleman who sits behind the red curtain in the organ-loft and attunes their ears to devotion every Sunday. A letter now and then in the *Times* newspaper, printed in considerable type, and signed 'Your Reporter,' reasserting some fact that has been denied, is the nearest personal approach we ever make to that 'chief' who is everywhere amongst us taking notes, and with the avowed intention of printing them. Sometimes we hear of a stupid slight having been put upon these useful gentlemen, such as inadequate accommodation at a would-be public meeting, or even inadequate food at a would-be public dinner, and, lo and behold! the meeting or the dinner might just as well have not been held, for the space that should have been devoted to them in 'our columns,' is filled up with the complaints of our outraged ministers—who shut up their note-books upon the occasion in question in disgust, or, having the artistic gift, draw caricatures in them instead of reporting. Moreover, now and then, a singular circumstance takes place: we have been (say) to Covent Garden last night, where the *Prima Donna* was ill who was to have established the new opera, and where a younger *cantatrice* and an older opera had to be substituted; nevertheless, in the morning paper we find that this was not the case, but that the new piece was

introduced with complete success, and that Madame Squeakalini, the favourite, even outdid herself, and exhibited a breadth, a compass, a conception, and a number of other things quite without parallel, particularly in the aria entitled *Bow-wow-te-teedle-ow*. It remains, therefore, that either we ourselves were exceedingly intoxicated last night, or the musical reporter— Well, we charitably abstain from conjecture, and content ourselves with concluding that these mysteries of the Fourth Estate are far too deep for us to fathom. Now, however, thanks to Mr Charles J. Gratton,* we know all about them, and are admitted behind the sheets.

This gentleman gives us a narrative of reporting in parliament from the time of Sir Simon d'Ewes, who took notes in short-hand of the debates, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, until now. Parliament, it seems, was always violently averse to any publication of their proceedings till 1641, when, after abolishing the Star-chamber, it printed its own doings in *The Diurnal of Occurrences, or Daily Proceedings of both Houses in this Great and Happy Parliament*. This, however, afforded but scanty intelligence, and did not satisfy the public, for whose edification other and more diffuse journals were speedily set up. Thereupon the House grew wroth, and 'it was ordered, "That no member shall either give a copy of or publish in print anything that he shall speak here without the leave of the House;"' and about ten days afterwards, a second resolution was passed, "That all members of the House are enjoined to deliver out no copy or notes of anything that is brought into the House or propounded or agitated in the House." This resolution was soon broken, for we find that on the 2d February 1642, the Commons resolved, "That a book by Sir Edward Dering, *A Collection of Speeches, &c.*, is against the honour and privilege of this House, scandalous to the House, shall be burned by the common hangman, himself be disabled from sitting, and a new writ issue." By a vote of 85 against 61, sentence was pronounced against him by the Speaker, and he was committed to the Tower.'

Andrew Marvel was one of the members who described the daily proceedings of parliament, when the newspaper accounts were thus suppressed; from 1660 to 1678, indeed, he regularly transmitted to his constituents at Hull a faithful account of each day's proceedings—a fact which, it must be allowed, puts his patriotism beyond cavil. We wonder how the honourable member for Hull would like that little job in these days! Such information could not, however, be made general, and the public demand still begot its supply of illegal intelligence. Newswriter after newswriter was summoned by the serjeant-at-arms, and made to acknowledge his wickedness before the House upon his knees; and in 1727, no less a person than Mr Edward Cave was imprisoned for the like offence. This crafty gentleman confined himself for the future to evading the law instead of defying it, and printed his reports in the following mitigated but somewhat transparent fashion: 'The speech of Sir J——n A——gu, Bart., one of the knights of the shire for the county of C——wall.' Sir Robert Walpole was similarly referred to as Sir R——t W——lp——e, and Mr Wyndham as Mr W——nd——m. Even this modest device being interdicted, 'Cave opened his magazine, in June 1738, with an article entitled "The Debates in the Senate of 'Magna Lilliputia,'" in which he artfully deplored the prohibition which forbade him to present his readers with the consultations of their own representatives, and expressed a hope that they would accept as a substitute those of that country which Captain Lemuel Gulliver had then so lately rendered illustrious, and which untimely death had prevented that illustrious traveller from publishing himself. The Dukes were styled "Nardacs;" the

* *The Gallery: a Sketch of Parliamentary Reporting and Reporters.* By C. J. Gratton. Pitman, London.

Lords, "Hurgoes;" the Commons, "Clinabs," and the letters in their respective names were transposed or slightly disarranged. Thus, the Duke of Bedford appeared under the transparent disguise of "The Nardac Bedford;" Lord Talbot, "The Hurgos Toblat;" Walpole, "Sir Rubs Waleup;" Lyttleton, "Lettyltino;" Bathurst, "Brustath;" Fox, "Feaunks;" Wynn, "Ooyn." Under this fiction, he continued to publish the debates of the British parliament. The above terms Cave explained to his readers by annexing to his volume for 1738 feigned proposals for printing a work called *Anagrammata Rediviva*. The *St James's Chronicle* published "The Debates of the Representatives of Utopia," and the *London Magazine* favoured the public with a "Journal of the Proceedings and Debates in the Political Club," and gave Roman names to the speakers. So it was not an uncommon thing to read an elaborate account of the speech which Octavius Augustus delivered on such a day on the increase of the income-tax question, or be informed how Julius Caesar bored the House with a three hours' speech on church-rates.

The way in which Cave obtained his reports was this. He was Inspector of Franks to the post-office, and therefore brought much into contact with the officers of both Houses, who readily gave him access thereto. When anything of importance was going on, he would go down to the House accompanied by a friend; and these two persons, from the gallery of the Commons, or some obscure and out-of-the-way place in the Lords, would remain for hours taking stealthy notes of the speeches—unknown to Serjeant-at-arms or Black Rod—sufficient to form the groundwork of a more extensive report at a future time. Cave's first editor of the debates was Guthrie, author of the continuation of Smollett's *England*; and his second, as everybody knows, was Samuel Johnson. The information supplied to Johnson by the above means was meagre enough, and, indeed, Sir John Hawkins declares that the reports were often entirely fictitious, and the fruit of Johnson's imagination. "I wrote that in a garret in Exeter Street," said the doctor at a certain dinner-party, when one of Mr Pitt's speeches was being extravagantly lauded. "I never was in the gallery of the House of Commons but once, Cave had an interest with the door-keepers. He and the persons under him got admittance. They brought away the subject of discussion, the names of the speakers, the side they took, and the order in which they rose, together with notes of the various arguments adduced in the course of the debate. The whole was afterwards communicated to me, and I composed the speeches in the form they now have in the parliamentary debates; for the speeches of that period are all taken from Cave's magazine." This account, however, rests solely upon Mr Murphy's authority, and Smollett (although cautioned by Hawkins) always treated Johnson's debates as genuine, and has quoted largely from them in his history.

Cave, however, was a second time brought, quite literally, upon his knees, and the science of parliamentary reporting suffered a long eclipse. It was a fine of £100 to mention a peer's name in connection with proceedings in the House; and one of them, Lord Marchmont, was accustomed to examine the newspapers every day with the ardour that a hawk paws for prey; and whenever he found any lord's name printed in any paper, he immediately made a motion in the House of Peers against the printer for a breach of privilege.

"In November 1759, the printer of the *Gazetteer* published in his paper a paragraph stating that the thanks of the House of Lords had been given to Sir Edward Hawke for his victory. He was brought to the bar for such a high offence, and obliged to make an apology on his knees!"

The grand debate upon Wilkes's Middlesex election made the mouth of the public water for these

forbidden reports, and the proprietors of magazines and newspapers to offend afresh. Colonel George Onslow took the most leading part in the persecution of these sinners, and with a considerable feeling of personal irritation: they had called him 'Cocking George'—in allusion to his attachment to that favourite pursuit, we suppose—and had even described himself and his cousin 'as astronomers distinguish the constellations of the two Bears in the heavens, the one being called the great and the other the little scoundrel.' A reward was issued for the apprehension of one Whible, the printer of the *Middlesex Journal*; but upon his being seized, and taken before Alderman Wilkes, that gentleman discharged him from custody. Subsequently, Lord Mayor Crosby, also a member of parliament, discharged a similar case; whereupon his lordship was committed by the House to the Tower for the remainder of the session, but that with such an excitement and uproar of the people, that the result of the whole business was, that the right of the public to know everything about the proceedings of parliament was silently acknowledged, and has never since been questioned.

Though the debates were permitted to be recorded, no sort of accommodation, nevertheless, was granted to the reporters themselves, who had to scramble for their seats in the Strangers' Gallery, and *hear* without being permitted to *write*. Their note-books had to be used furtively, and under the most disadvantageous circumstances; and to be a good reporter, it was above all things essential that you should possess a good memory. One of the most celebrated of these "memory" reporters was William Radcliffe, the husband of the eminent novelist of that name. It is said that this gentleman would carry the substance of the debates in his head straight to the compositors' room, and without referring to any notes, or committing any portion of his materials to paper, would there dictate to them two distinct articles embracing the principal points of what he had heard. Another of these memoried gentlemen was William Woodfall—not Junius's Woodfall, but his brother—who had so quick and tenacious a memory that it obtained for him the name of "Memory Woodfall;" and his renown was so great and so widely spread, that when strangers came up from the country to hear the debates, they asked in a breath, "Which is the Speaker, and which is Mr Woodfall?" He would sit in the gallery from the time the door was opened until the rising of the House, without any other refreshment than a hard-boiled egg or two, which he would carefully take out of his coat-pocket, and taking off the shell in his hat, would devour it with great gusto; stooping down all the while, for fear the serjeant-at-arms should see him, and march him off for such an infraction of the rules of the House against strangers. The circulation of Woodfall's paper was increased by this means, stale as his news necessarily was, until Perry of the *Morning Chronicle* took the wind out of his sails by publishing the debates several hours earlier; this he accomplished by having relays of reporters, and so by a division of labour being enabled to print and publish in the morning a report of the previous evening's debate. His staff was generally formed of quick-witted but vulgar Irishmen, who came over to England, it was said, 'to be porters or reporters, as luck might have it.' One of them, Mark Supple, had as much wit and fun as an Irish porter could carry, and often more than he himself could carry or know what to do with. "One evening as he sat at his post in the gallery waiting the issue of things, and a hint to hang tropes and figures upon, a dead silence happened to prevail in the House. It was when Mr Addington was Speaker. The bold leader of the "press-gang" was never much on serious business bent, and at this time he was particularly full of meat and wine: delighted, therefore, with the pause, but thinking something might as well be going forward, he called

out lustily, "A song from Mr Speaker!" Imagine Addington's long, prim, upright figure; his consternation and utter want of preparation for, or a clue to repel, such an interruption of the rules and orders of parliament. The House was in a roar. Pitt, it is said, could hardly keep his seat for laughing. When the bustle and confusion were abated, the serjeant-at-arms went up into the gallery, to take the audacious culprit into custody, and indignantly desired to know who it was, but nobody would tell. Mark Supple sat like a tower on the undermost bench of the gallery, imperturbable in his own gravity, and safe in the faith of the brotherhood of reporters, who alone were in the secret. At length, as the mace-bearer was making fruitless inquiries, and getting impatient, Mark pointed to a fat Quaker, who sat in the middle of the crowd, and nodded assent that he was the man.

The number of reporters varies according to the size and prosperity of the journal on which they are engaged. The *Daily News* has about fifteen,* and the *Times* eighteen, or so. They are divided into two bodies, one for the Lords, and one for the Commons, but changing their scene of duty every week. When either House rises before the other, that portion of the corps which is relieved goes in and helps their brethren; and so, by reducing the length of the 'turns,' the work is lightened, and the printer—which is the great desideratum—gets his 'copy' the more quickly. The man that has the first turn—and the order is decided by lot—goes into the Commons at four, and stays there three-quarters of an hour, perhaps, taking down all that is in his opinion worth reporting; when the next man takes his place in the gallery—now appropriated to the craft, and placed just over the Speaker's head—he goes to the Reporters' Room, which is close by, and there converts his short-hand notes into writing, which, leaf by leaf, as it is thrown off, is immediately taken to be set up in type. It takes two or three hours to write out one half-hour's 'turn,' according to the importance of the subject and the ability of the reporter; but it is said of Mr Charles Dickens, that when on Perry's staff he wrote out the copy of a whole column and a half of the *Morning Chronicle* in an hour. The length of each 'turn' is much reduced as it grows late, and if the debate be prolonged to three or four in the morning, will not, perhaps, exceed as many minutes. 'Sometimes, when there is a stiff debate on hand, such as on a "no-confidence" question, the prime minister will speak for several hours together, and consequently all the reporters will have a hand in it. The speech may be in several places at the same time: part may be in the act of being written out by the reporter, part on the way from the House to the printing-office, part on the editor's table, where he is writing his leader, part in the compositors' hand, and part in the process of delivery. Nay, more; in these days of electric telegraph, the first portion of a speech is often read in Liverpool or Manchester before the remainder has passed the orator's lips at Westminster.'

The 'gallery' view of parliamentary orators is of course somewhat different from that of the general public, who have not to write down what the orators say. 'A reporter does not care so much about your crack-speakers, unless they are slow of speech. Lord Palmerston is liked very much, although, generally speaking, his *ipso nomine verba* have to be taken down. He is not a quick speaker, and by no means a fluent one, especially in the beginning of a speech. He is like an old coach-horse, whose limbs are rather stiff at first, but work better when the blood gets warm and the circulation quicker. It is so, decidedly, with "the Bottle-holder;" he hums and hahs, and—ur—speaks—ur—as—ur—though—as though—he—ur—were unaccustomed to it. Now he proceeds very hesitatingly

and with caution; and presently, all on a sudden, he proceeds briskly with a few sentences—somewhat in the style of one walking along the street and treading on a piece of orange-peel by accident. He is an easy man to report: he delivers his words as though they were precious, and should not be lost to those for whom they were intended. He is undoubtedly a very deliberate speaker, and being a popular and a leading man, whenever he is on his legs the House is remarkably quiet; button-holdings are abandoned, and private conversations cease. Lord Stanley is not so bad; he speaks with a tolerable fluency, but is rather indistinct in articulation. His father, Lord Derby, is by no means a friend of the reporters; for a great deal of "copy" has to be written out whenever he opens his lips. Bright is fluent, distinct—and often wrist-aching. So are Gladstone and Sir George Grey. . . . Macaulay, when in the Lower House, was the terror of the reporters, as he had a most rapid delivery, and rarely stammered or hesitated for an apt mode of expression, for he generally prepared his orations beforehand. In the year 1836, he delivered a most brilliant oration at an anti-slavery meeting. At the close of the meeting, Mr (afterwards Mr Justice) Therry told Mr Macaulay that, from his rapid mode of speaking, and from so much of the merit of the speech being dependent on the accurate collocation of the words in which his many metaphors and figures were expressed, it would be only an act of justice to himself to furnish a report of the speech. At first, he hesitated, and expressed some doubts whether he could furnish sufficiently ample notes for the purpose. However, on Mr Therry telling him due attention should be made to any notes he thought proper to furnish, if he forwarded them to the *Morning Chronicle* office by eight o'clock that evening, he agreed to do so. On going to the office of that journal at the above hour, Mr Therry found a large packet, containing a verbatim report of the speech as spoken—the brilliant passages marked in pencil, and the whole manuscript well thumbed over, furnishing manifest denotement that no speech in Enfield's *Speaker* was more laboriously and faithfully committed to memory than that delivered by the great historian of the age.'

In *David Copperfield* will be found the most accurate as well as humorous description of the difficulties of stenography, by one, as we have said, of the ablest that ever sat in the Reporters' Gallery. Lord Campbell, when a young man, sat there also, and also on Perry's staff; so did Hazlitt and John Payne Collier. Justice Talfourd, too, was a reporter, and Courvoisier Phillips, and last, but by no means least, Mr Special-Correspondent Russell.

SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR.

'YE'RE no thinking to ride far this coarse morning, doctor, I hope. Your cough was wearif' to hear last night—I could hardly sleep for it,' said Mrs Black, the doctor's wife, as, in the course of her household avocations, she chanced to cross the little entrance where her husband was tying his woollen comforter round and round his throat, and wrapping his plaid closely about him, like a man determined to defy wind and weather.

'The day's not so bad as it looks,' replied the doctor cheerfully; 'the wind is from the west, and I saw a break in the clouds just now. And really I'm anxious about poor Miss Menzies, who wrote me a week ago that she was worse than usual, and thought her draught should be changed.'

'Fiddlesticks!' said Mrs Black with startling vehemence. 'I've no patience, doctor, with Miss Menzies and her draughts. A great, strong, bony woman like that to be setting up to be an invalid, and lying full-length on the sofa a' the day long—I'm sure her health's no worth so much taking care of.'

* Since this volume was published, the reporters of the *Daily News* have been amalgamated with those of two other papers.

It's my belief that there's naething the matter with her, and I'd have you to tell her so.'

'It is rather an obscure case, I grant,' said the doctor, who by this time had converted himself into a shapeless bundle of 'haps.' But whatever the cause, she's a great sufferer and a lone woman, and I would not like to neglect the daughter of an old and a good friend of mine when I needed friends. And by the way, Bell, my woman,' he added with a good-natured wink of his eye at his energetic little partner, 'how is it that you never advise me to tell Lady Louisa Silliwun that there's nothing the matter with *her*? I'm sure she looks far more blooming than ever poor Miss Menzies did, and it's much the same case, I suspect.'

This was a home-thrust, and put an end to any further discussion; for the castle and its fair patient was the best card in the doctor's hand, and during the shooting-season, when the family came down, brought in more into the Blacks's treasury than the rest of the neighbourhood put together; it was very natural that Mrs Black, a mother and a manager, should respect Lady Louisa Silliwun accordingly, and thoroughly believe in her ailments; whereas Miss Menzies was one of that tiresome class, too familiar to professional experience, which brings neither fame nor profit; never ill enough to excite much sympathy, and never decidedly better—a sort of perpetual protest against the efficacy of medical treatment. Then, again, she was far from rich, and this the kind-hearted practitioner never failed to remember in his half-yearly bills, contriving often to lengthen a ride so as to give her a call which should not appear in the light of a professional visit, and changing one harmless nostrum for another with a patience which roused all Mrs Black's impatience, and sometimes led her to declare that if it had been 'ony ither than Miss Menzies, she wadna be o'er weel pleased, the doctor having been acquaint wi' her in her youth; but he'd ower keen an eye for a bonny face to look twice at yon puir banie bodie'; and Mrs Black would glance down complacently at her own round trim figure, or, if a glass were at hand, at her comely countenance.

Meanwhile—to return to this particular morning—Dr Black, well swathed and impervious to the weather, mounted his shaggy pony, and fagged leisurely along the straight road of the very unpicturesque district in Galloway where his lot was cast. It was a rough dark day indeed, and the break in the sky which his cheery temperament had led him to see or fancy, had got clouded over again. The rain drove down slanting across the monotonous neatly ploughed fields, squared out by bleak stone-walls. There were no trees to speak of; sometimes, by way of variety, a small stunted plantation turning its back to the coast, and making the best of it; sometimes a few yards of hedgerow, giving a clothed and comfortable look to a stoutly built homestead; but generally only ploughed fields and walls—walls and ploughed fields. Nothing worth looking at on such a day as this, at all events; so, while the doctor fags on, we shall briefly glance over Miss Menzies's life of forty years, and then give him the meeting at her house-door.

'There are some faces,' says Jean Paul, 'in which you read a story; in others, only a date.' Certainly there was no romantic story in Miss Menzies's long and singularly plain visage, and even the date had not been clearly marked there, for when she was young, she never looked so; nay, it could hardly be an exaggeration to affirm that she never was young. Who does not know people of this type? She had lost her mother—a grave matter-of-fact woman—when she was a child of seven. For two years she was her father's chief companion, and then he married again. There was no fault to be found with the step-mother, a worthy person of mature age, who was always kind, if not loving, and who treated the little Rebecca much as she did her own boy, when he came, with an anxious

affection that chiefly took the turn of over-attention to bodily health, constant terror of wet feet and open windows, and constant restrictions as to quality of food and quantity of exercise; which had perhaps something to do with Miss Menzies's chronic invalidism in after-years, and with her young brother running off to sea when he was a lad of fourteen, and she a woman of twenty-four. Ten years later, her step-mother died after a long illness, during which Rebecca dutifully tended her; and old Mr Menzies did not long survive his wife. He left his small landed estate—heavily mortgaged—to his sailor-son, who was getting on well in the merchant-service, and whose preference of the sea to the ministry his father had long ago forgiven. For his daughter, he had bought an annuity of £80 a year. 'You'll never marry, Becky, my dear,' he had said; 'and this will keep you comfortable, wi' care, so long as you live. My blessing to my boy when he comes home. I would ha' liked that he should carry my head to the kirkyard, but the Lord knows what is best for us a'. Ye maun stay at the auld place till he returns, and keep a' things thegither for him.'

Some months later, the young sailor paid a visit to his home of early days; sold it; invested the small capital it brought him in certain Brazilian mines, which he had been to visit in the course of his travels, and from which he expected a fabulous percentage; helped to look out a small house for his sister in the old neighbourhood; smartened it up with feather-flowers and bright shells, which he had brought back for his mother; and then went off again upon another cruise, with a shuddering pity for the deadly dulness of Rebecca's way of living, relieved by the conviction that, 'Poor, good old girl! it's the only thing, somehow, that one could ever have looked to for her.'

Miss Menzies, once installed in her new home, and having hired an able-bodied servant, capable of doing all its work and more, might perhaps have found the time hang heavily, but for the delicate health the care of which filled up her hours. While her parents lived, and afterwards in the old home, there had always been enough for her to do, for she was an attentive daughter, and had a faculty for looking after outdoor labourers as well as domestic servants. Reading had never formed a prominent part of her occupations. She read her Bible and a few devotional works with scrupulous exactness, if not with much enjoyment; read, too, the weekly newspaper in something of the same conscientious spirit, and occasionally worked her way through a book of travels, for the sake of her sailor-brother; but she held light literature in contempt. She could sew neatly and well, it was true, but her simple wardrobe once in good order, there was not much scope for sewing. Further, she had no correspondents, and morning-callers were very few in that part of the country, especially for one situated as she was; for, belonging, as she never for a moment forgot she did, to one of the old county families, Miss Menzies would have resented any attempt at sociality on the part of the wealthy farmers and their richly dressed wives, while, with her small means, she could keep up no reciprocity of visiting with any of the scattered gentry round. Her pride and unattractiveness combined kept her lonely, and so her days might have been empty and long if she had been the hale, robust woman she seemed made to be. Or perhaps Mrs Black was right, and she might have been robust and hale but for this unoccupied time, which she filled up by an invalid's routine. Perhaps her long catalogue of aches and pains was but a symptom of the mildew of self-love that grows upon those who have no others to love them—a device for conferring some importance upon this 'untenanted life' of hers, so little important to any one besides. But, at all events, it is some comfort to think that she had never analysed her own case, and that the uneventful existence of the plain middle-aged woman, passing quietly away, dull week by week,

dull year after year, had never impressed her imagination with the same sense of dreariness and vacuity which we of the busier present day feel in glancing over it as a whole.

By this time, we may suppose the doctor arrived at her door, where he was kept waiting longer than usual; and when at length the maid appeared, she had a flustered expression quite unusual to her.

'How is Miss Menzies the day?'

'Terrible well. She's just packing up for a journey.'

The doctor could not believe his ears, and going up stairs, could as little believe his eyes. Miss Menzies was not upon the sofa, had not on her usual invalid attire; she was sitting at the table with her bonnet on, writing, and when she heard his step, she jumped up with an alacrity of which he had not supposed her capable.

'I am glad you are come, Dr Black. I was just writing you. I've been wearying to see you these last days. Sit ye down, sit ye down. Such news as I've got to tell you! Ye'll mind the letter Jamie wrote me a year ago?'

'To be sure I do. Your brother told you he was on the point of sailing again for Brazil on a three-years' cruise, and that he took a heavy heart with him, having fallen in love with a pretty toothless Welsh lassie at Swansea. I mind he told you they would make a match of it, if he was so lucky as to return safe and sound; and I mind, too, I laughed at you a little for writing him a long screed of a letter to dissuade him from such an imprudent step.'

'Would you believe it, doctor, that the poor boy should ha' been sae left to himself as to marry the toothless lassie before he sailed?'

'Boy!' demurred the doctor, with a rather sly look.

'Weel, weel, to be sure he was auld enough to know better; but this is what has come o' his rashness.' And with some agitation, she placed in his hands the following letter: 'MADAM—It is my painful duty to inform you that Mrs James Menzies, who has been residing in my apartments ever since Captain Menzies sailed eleven months ago, expired this morning very unexpectedly, though in delicate health for some time previous. A few hours before the last, she requested me to write to you respecting the baby, which is a thriving child. We shall try to delay the funeral till we hear from you.—Waiting your instructions, madam, your obedient servant, JANE HEWSON.

Duke Street, Liverpool, February 5, 1840.

'You see, doctor,' Miss Menzies went on, 'the letter has been mis-sent to Galway, and time sain wasted; and I got it twa days syne, but it's to-night the boat sails, and I'm just about to start, though the poor young creature will be buried, I doubt, before I can get there.'

'And what, my good friend, are your plans respecting the infant?'

'I shall bring it back with me, unless I find some of her friends willing and able to claim it. But that's no likely, for she was an orphan—so much my brother told me. It's just awfu', doctor, to think of the thochtless things men will do! But, now, I'll be the better of a little of your good advice.'

The advice, however, was not upon the usual subject of health, had not the remotest reference to change of medicine; it related to the journey, probable miles to be encountered, and the arrangements to be made on arriving at the strange town. Miss Menzies had never been out of her native county, and in spite of her strong, resolute aspect, felt herself a most incompetent traveller. The doctor gave her the benefit of his experience, and jogged home again so briskly, that the shaggy pony did not know what to make of it; but the good man longed to impart the stupendous intelligence to Mrs Black, for, in a remote country neighbourhood, with only a weekly local newspaper to connect him with the outer world, he, too, like his weaker brethren, unconsciously felt any departure

from the *status quo* a grateful excitement; and not the less so when seasoned with something of a melancholy element, as in the present case.

Miss Menzies reached her journey's end without accident, but not without alarm. The sea was rough; the landing on the busy stage, in the discomfort of early morning, was trying; but of her many fears, marvellous to relate, none took the accustomed direction. She positively forgot her spasms, her sinkings, and all the other symptoms that had so long been the only variety in her solitary life. She had something else to think about.

The funeral was over, as she had surmised; but in the melancholy room, still bearing the impress and the chill of the presence of the dead, there lay the unconscious infant of two months, in its little cradle, and beside it sat a florid-faced country-girl, who rose and curtseied respectfully. Miss Menzies knelt down and peered long into the little nest. 'The bonny wee bairnie, the nice, wee, dainty bairnie,' she murmured. The tears gathered as she listened to the soft breathing, and watched the rosy sleep. Presently the child opened its eyes, and then—wearily, perhaps, of lying there—stretched out its little arms to the stranger. Miss Menzies took it up, and gently folded it to her breast. Its warm waxen fingers strayed over her gaunt face. She did not speak a word as she paced up and down; she could not have spoken—a great revulsion was going on within her; fountains of undreamed-of tenderness were welling up; the woman's soul waking for the first time at the baby's touch; a new life beginning for her in the life of another. It was a pang to give the small soft burden out of her arms even when it cried.

'To be fed, ma'am,' respectfully suggested the florid-faced girl, with another low curtsey.

'You are its nurse,' said Miss Menzies, with a strange thrill of envy, as, with many a kiss and Welsh word of endearment, Betty Jones took the baby and laid it across her knee, where it gurgled and cooed in glad anticipation.

There was much to be done and settled on that eventful day; but one thing was clear to Miss Menzies's mind—that child she would never part with; indeed, there seemed but little probability of any one putting in a rival claim. The poor young wife had been brought by her husband to these lodgings; their short honey-moon had been spent there; and after he left her, she had lived there quite alone. No one had come to see her. From the landlady's account, Miss Menzies inferred that her health had been delicate from the first, though she got over her confinement well, and no danger was apprehended till the end came.

'But she never was able to nurse the baby, ma'am, and Betty Jones has been with it ever since its birth. I think poor Mrs Menzies had a shock, ma'am, in a letter she got about a fortnight ago. I found her crying over it more than once, and it was under her pillow when she died. Perhaps you would like to look at it.'

Miss Menzies recognised the handwriting at once—the letter was from her brother, and she read it, to ascertain his plans. How loving it was!—how full of tender memories of their brief three weeks together! Was it indeed so unwise, that marriage of his? It had made two souls happy with some happiness she had never known, which for the first time in her life she could dimly guess at. What was there here to shake the sand of that ebbing life? Hurrying on, she soon came to it. The Brazilian mines were an utter failure; henceforth, he feared he could make but small remittances to his darling, &c. Well, she was gone, poor lamb, where she would not need them; and, at least, till her brother's return, the child was hers—hers! He had stretched out his little arms to her. She was sorry about these mines. Dr Black, she remembered, had never thought well of the speculation; but in

point of fact, it occasioned her just then far greater disquietude to know what to do about Betty the nurse. Mrs Hewson assured her that she was quite essential to the child, and yet there was no wedding-ring upon her finger. It cost Miss Menzies no common effort to allude to this anomaly to the unabashed Betty, and she feared she was guilty of a sin in committing the innocent baby to her care. But then there was his health at stake; and struggling hard against her repugnance, Miss Menzies, before the evening was over, had tolerated the whole history of what Betty called her 'misfortune,' and had positively engaged her to travel to Scotland with her, and there remain for six months, until such time as the little Jamie could safely bear to be weaned; little foreseeing that the incompatibility between their respective races would lead to her Scotch maid giving her warning within a month, while Betty was destined to hold her ground in the respectable spinster's establishment for years and years to come.

Miss Menzies had henceforth a more cheerful method of marking their course; no longer by the setting in of a new symptom, or the trial of a new medicine, but by the unfolding of some fresh childish charm, or the strengthening of some mental promise; no longer by her own gradual decline, but by the upspringing of her bonny boy. And bonny Jamie Menzies truly was, not only to his aunt's and to Betty's idolising gaze, the country people even turned to look after him as he bounded by them in his play-hours; and even Mrs Black, despite her prepossession in favour of her own Sandy, a lad of a quite different type, would frankly declare that 'how you bonny callant should come o' the Menzies stock passed her altogether. Just see to his curls, like gowd i' the sunlight, doctor, and his sma' straight face, and sic wee hands and feet, forby he's so tall for his years. There never was a Menzies than ever I heard tell o' but had great, lang, banie hands and feet, like the skeleton in your surgery. My! just to see him coming into the kirk wi' his aunt; there's an awfu' differ between them.'

Perhaps, indeed, it was the unconscious influence of this very 'differ' that gave the little fellow such an absolute hold over his aunt's affections. At all events, she could see no fault in him. His childish naughtinesses had their fascinations for her; and her indulgence of his every whim was only exceeded by Betty's, who doted upon her nursling even less wisely, and, having herself a less definite standard of right and wrong, far more perniciously.

Before the child had been two years under her care, Miss Menzies heard of her brother's death. The mortification and anxiety of finding that he had invested his all so insecurely, the shock of his young wife's death, undermined his health; then came repeated attacks of the fever of the country, under which he sank, committing his orphan boy to his sister's kindness, and hopeful to the last that, in future days, he at least might reap a rich harvest from those mine-shares that had proved so disastrous to his unhappy father.

'I'm glad he could keep the hope,' said Miss Menzies one day through her tears, to her confidential friend Dr Black; 'it would cheer himself; but I canna' share it. Jamie must just depend upon his own abilities, and it will go hard with me but he shall have a good upbringing.' Dr Black perfectly agreed in despairing of the mines, and added a fervent hope that the boy might never hear of them. Unfortunately, Betty had heard of them, and in after-years often and often she would feed the boy's fancy with pictures of future wealth, and luxury, and consequence, not as the result of industry, but as a substitute for it. Poor Betty! most inveterate of spoilers, warm of heart, but defective in the moral sense that ever assured refractory child the bitter medicine was sweet as sugar, and smacked her lips

over it in corroboration; or beat the naughty table that went and 'knocked its pretty head it did'; or gave the forbidden dainty on the sly; or hid the petty delinquency by half-truth or untruth, according to the exigency of the case. Poor fond, foolish Betty! it would be hard to estimate the evil that she did with her flattery and her day-dreams; for the weed fell upon the congenial soil of a peculiarly pleasure-loving and self-indulgent nature. Quite aware of his handsome looks, young Jamie Menzies had an innate love of all that was externally graceful and refined, and an unusual value (unusual among boys) for the distinctions that follow in the train of wealth; and therefore it was by no means the advantage it appeared, but rather it was a serious misfortune that he should be the favourite companion of young Walter Blount, and a very frequent guest at the castle in holiday-time, for it only led to his returning home terribly dissatisfied with all its arrangements, and shrinking from his own future prospects; unless, indeed, these mines Betty told him of should turn out well yet. It was no use talking to his aunt about them—it made her look grumpy at once; but why should they not? A bright possibility gets to look so probable to a young imagination. Sometimes it would cross Miss Menzies's own mind that, from one cause or other, her boy was acquiring tastes not quite suited to the means of a medical student, for such it was now decided he was to be; but she, too, was not insensible to the pleasure of seeing him admired, and would hush many a misgiving by the reflection: 'His forbears held their ain wi' the best in the county, and so may he, and what for no?' But how much contriving and planning, how much pinching of herself in every way it took even now to furnish our young gentleman with the sort of coats and boots he chose to wear, was known only to herself and to Betty. In this one particular the two women agreed, though in their secret hearts there was but little love between them. That 'them old maids knows nothing about boys' was Betty's fixed opinion; and accordingly, beyond her usual curtsey and assenting 'Yes, sure, ma'am,' she paid not the slightest heed to any suggestion of Miss Menzies, however sensible it might be; and, on the other hand, Miss Menzies felt many a secret pang of jealousy at Betty's influence, for the boy had far more often a kiss and good-humoured word for his fresh-faced nurse than for his gaunt undemonstrative aunt, who had no power of shewing the deep-seated love of her heart in pleasant caress or playful word, could never speak it, could only act it out in a career of self-sacrifice the young thoughtless nature never even noticed. However, Betty and Miss Menzies had between them the strong bond of a common worship; both were absorbed in Jamie, both had wept and trembled over his sick-bed in his childhood, and both gloried in the beauty and the intellectual promise of his youth. Both believed there never was such a boy, and the imagination of both was constantly occupied with his future; only while Miss Menzies delighted to picture the distinguished and successful professional man, Betty preferred to dream of the rich gentleman with nothing to do, and everything to enjoy; and unfortunately it was this latter anticipation that young Menzies himself preferred.

The time had now come for his entering the Edinburgh University as a student. His aunt was determined to allow him more than half her income. 'Will it suffice, doctor? Will he be able to get on, no perhaps as a Menzies might ha' looked to do, but like mony and mony others of gentle bluid?'

'Indeed will he, if he's commonly prudent,' vowed the doctor over and over again, remembering the honest and successful struggle of his own youth on a less liberal allowance, and knowing how well at the present time his own Sandy was getting on with the little he was able to spare him. 'But I'm just afraid,' he said, while canvassing the subject with his wife,

'that Miss Menzies will be pinching herself more than she should. She's far frailer now than in the days when she was always on her sofa. However, it's a grand thing for her to have something to live for, and to be sure, he's a fine young fellow, and will do her credit, I doubt not, some of these days.'

'I wish ye may be right, doctor,' said Mrs Black with an ominous shake of her head. 'Ye always look on the sunny-side; but my mind misgives me—it's no' a gowd that glitters. And what wi' that auld body his aunt, and that feckless Betty, and the family at the castle, who suld know better, asking him to a' their grand ploys, and setting him abune his station, his head's gey turned. That boy has been trained in the way he suldn'a go, and the end's no come yet.'

When the first session was over, and Miss Menzies was rejoicing in the expectation of seeing again her 'bairn,' as she loved still to call him, she received a letter from him, telling her that two of his most intimate friends, Urquhart and Irvine ('Gude names yon,' said Miss Menzies, half complacently, half anxiously), were planning a short walking-tour in Germany, and had asked him to accompany them. Could she (he was half ashamed to ask it, but he knew her kindness—hoped one day to repay it—Brazilian mines were looking up, he had been informed on the best authority)—could she advance him a small sum? It was to be a *walking* tour, she would observe, and would cost him very little—twenty pounds would do. Twenty pounds! At first, Miss Menzies flatly declared it impossible. It was hard, too, not to see her darling this summer; and yet it was harder still to disappoint him. Betty and she talked it over. Would it be possible to spend less than they did? Could the fire burn lower in the kitchen-grate? Throughout the winter, Miss Menzies had only burned one in her sitting-room, for two or three hours in the middle of the day, lest a casual caller should detect the economy. Could life be supported on a smaller amount of their rigidly simple fare? At all events, they would see what they could do. Betty had saved £3 of her wages; Miss Menzies had some old brooches and mourning-rings—'gude gold.' The matter was transacted in a roundabout way, with some delay and probable loss; but the upshot of it was, that the effort was made, and the tour taken.

During the next session, Jamie's letters grew shorter still, and came less frequently. Something, too, there was of recklessness in their tone, which troubled Miss Menzies's heart, and she no longer read them aloud to Dr Black when he called. More than once her nephew had inveighed against his 'cursed poverty' (was he then so pinched, puri laddie? yet she had given him almost her all), and had alluded to those mine-shares as though, for him, hope lay mainly in that direction. All this was bad, but there was worse behind. Sandy Black—steady, silent Sandy—had written word to his father that young Menzies was living this session at a great rate, and was in far too gay a set to care for the like of him; that, in fact, their acquaintance had nearly dropped; and that he did not know well what to do, for it was painful to him to say a word against his early friend, but that he feared Jamie gave himself out to be in much better circumstances than he really was, and that there would be a crash before long, for the Edinburgh tradesmen were ill at waiting for their bills. After some deliberation, the kind-hearted doctor determined to communicate this intelligence to his old friend. She would have resented it but for her own secret misgivings. As it was, it confirmed a long-floating plan. She would go to Edinburgh, and judge for herself. She had been to blame in keeping back from her bairnie how straitened her means really were—how impossible, even for her love, to indulge him any further. She would appeal to his better principle, his honour—a Menzies was sure to be honourable—and he would adopt a new self-denying course. Very probably Sandy made the worst of it; his mother

was a scraping body, and he had not gentle blood in his veins, and was no judge of what was fitting for Jamie. And yet the tone of her boy's letters corroborated his account. Come what would, she could bear this suspense no longer. She would not trust to such a weak thing as any remonstrance she could pen. When she saw him, it would be given her to speak to his heart. She would go and judge for herself.

It was on a cold day towards the end of January that Miss Menzies set out on this the second journey she had ever taken in the course of her long life. Nearly nineteen years ago, she had travelled to Liverpool, since the baby in the cradle had stretched out his innocent arms towards her. How would the young student receive her now?

Travelling in the most inexpensive manner, outside a coach, then by steam-boat, then a slow train, it was only on the morning of the following day that she reached Edinburgh. Very beautiful it should have looked to a stranger's eye—the New Town, bright in the sunshine; the Old, in the mist of a frosty day—but she had no eyes for the contrast, nor for the picture of the blue Forth and the snow-covered Fifeshire coast, as with a beating heart she drove to her boy's lodgings. It would be terrible if he did not welcome her, if he were ashamed of his old aunt in this gay town; and she glanced with some uneasiness at her shabby attire. And it was terrible, too, to have to restrict him in any of his enjoyments. But he came of a good stout stock; and with his handsome face and clever tongue he would 'wastle well with ony difficulties, when once he came to know of them,' she said, to reassure herself as the cab stopped at the door in L—— Street; and she made her way up the two flights of stairs that led to his lodgings.

'Was Mr Menzies at home?'

'No; he was gone with twa ither young gentlemen to Duddingston Loch twa hours syne.'

She would wait for him then. When ushered into her nephew's room, Miss Menzies looked round in horror at its size and furniture. This was no room for a medical student with an allowance of £45 a year. In much agitation, she rang the bell, and requested to speak to the landlady, who glanced superciliously at her old-world dress, and seemed a good deal shocked, as well as surprised, to hear of the relation in which she stood to her lodger. The truth soon came out—worse, O worse than her darkest fears! These luxurious rooms—they seemed so to her—occupied since October last, had never yet been paid for; nay, more, much of the furniture they contained was hired.

'The worthless fellow!' exclaimed Mrs Reid, 'to go and give out that his aunt was a lady of fortune!'

'Did he do that?' almost shrieked Miss Menzies.

'O woman, dinna tell me he did that!'

The anguish in her look and tone somewhat softened the landlady's heart.

'Well, perhaps he did not just say so in so many words, but he let me think it. Such an air as there is about him! You'd judge him made of money to see him fling out his sixpences to any poor wife on the stairs; and such like friends as he has coming to see him! The good-for-nothing, deceitful!—'

'Hush!' said Miss Menzies imperiously. 'You shall be no loser by him. Go, go, and leave me alone.'

And now that there was no one to defend him against, she sat there more wretched still, because it was now her own heart that blamed him. He, a Menzies, and yet dishonest and untrue—he for whom she would have borne, *had* borne (she seemed to know it for the first time) any privation—was quite careless of her, and of the sorrow and shame he brought upon her declining years. When he returned, for the first time in her life she would speak severely to him, speak as he deserved, the ungrateful, unworthy boy. Mechanically she seated herself at the window

to wait for his arrival. Looking at every youthful figure that passed, the thought flashed across her mind how ungainly and common they all were compared to her bairn; but she would not admit it. 'What of looks?' she said, chiding herself for her weakness; 'what of the mere outside, if there be not a brave, true heart within?' And her whole frame thrilled with bitter indignation, and she thought over all the wrong and worthlessness of his conduct, lest strength should fail her to speak it out, and her old foolish affection revive the moment she should hear his light foot running up the stair. And so hour after hour passed, but she took no count of them, wrapped in her stern sorrow, and mistaking it for anger, when her eye fell upon a cab driving slowly on in her direction, and followed, or rather accompanied, by eager groups of three or four. Listlessly she watched it. On the box, by the driver, sat a fine-looking youth, with his face buried in his hands. The cab stopped at the foot of the common stair that had led her to the room where she sat. Some one sick, hurt within, no doubt; sorrow everywhere, but none like unto her sorrow! The young man on the box dismounts; another youth, pale and haggard, jumps out as soon as the door is opened. Students, perhaps; perhaps friends of *his*. They are preparing now to lift the sick man out, and the crowd closes more densely round. Ah! there is more than sickness there; she sees it in the horror-stricken faces of those nearest. Yes, at length they have succeeded. One of the young men staggers under the weight of the rigid limbs, and now—O God! it is her Jamie's curly head that hangs back heavy over the driver's arms. Dead! Drowned! *Her bairn!* There was not a dry eye among them all as the stricken woman, rushing down, flung her gaunt frame upon the body, while the old, old cry welled up once more out of the depths of a broken heart: 'Would to God I had died for thee, my son, my son!'

A few days later, a woman in the deepest mourning that comes within the reach of the poor, might have been seen calling at several of the fashionable shops in Edinburgh, and requesting to speak to their principal. In all of them her reception was marked with surprise, with something, too, of indignation, succeeded by more of pity. She was collecting her nephew's bills. In all they amounted to between two and three hundred pounds. 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all,' she had said to every one of the tradesmen. One or two had shrugged their shoulders, fancying that the shock had made her daft; the most of them believed her.

When Miss Menzies returned to her home, her first step was to announce the sale of all her homely furniture, save her boy's bed and a kitchen table and chairs. With the proceeds she defrayed the expenses of the funeral, and a part of the landlady's claim, as well as Betty's wages, and the expense of her journey back to her own country. The parting was a pang to both; for if they had never much loved each other, they had both loved him, and it was touching to see the elder sufferer control her own feelings in her endeavour to comfort the poor Welshwoman in her frantic, unrestrained grief. As soon as the sale was over, Miss Menzies moved into a little two-roomed cottage, taking no servant with her, and began to save all she could out of her little income. None of her old neighbours presumed to interfere. The respect still felt for her family would have checked them, even if her grief had not been sacred to them all. There she lives and saves at the present day. None can look at her emaciated pallid visage without suspecting that she hardly allows herself sufficient food, and in the coldest weather but little smoke is seen to rise from that cottage chimney. There are many kind hearts round who would fain administer to her comforts, but they know well that her proud, lonely

nature would resent the attempt, and they dare not seek to turn her from her life-purpose. Dr Black, intimate as he is with her, can do nothing here; and, indeed, though he has a kindlier interest in her than any one else feels, he is perhaps of all the one who pities her privations the least. He knows that, two months since, she paid off one of the least creditable of poor James's liabilities, and that if she be spared a very few years longer, she will have discharged them all. 'No shame shall rest upon my bairn's bonny head in his early grave,' she had said, and she would keep her word. A little cold, a little hunger, and *this* hope in her heart? Dr Black believes her a happier woman now, with 'something to live for,' as he phrases it, than in those self-centered days of invalid life. Ay, and she has another hope in her heart, too sacred even to be mentioned to him. She who has so forgiven her prodigal, how can she doubt the forgiveness of the Heavenly Father? She does not question, does not reason, far less could she discuss. Only when her task is done, and her boy's name cleared, she knows there is a better country where the weary are at rest; and thinking of him *there*, she forgets not only the horror of that sudden close, but all the wasted years of wayward youth—and they are baby arms that seem to stretch out to her once more and welcome her to heaven!

THE MONTH: SCIENCE AND ARTS.

Now that the question of removing the Natural History Department from the British Museum has been decided in the affirmative, a suggestion, which we hope will bear fruit, is put forward in favour of establishing a museum of natural history in sundry quarters of London, more especially in the east. Seeing that the great establishment in Bloomsbury has many a specimen in duplicate, not to say quadruplicate, there would be less difficulty in finding stock for local museums, than in providing proper buildings; and then, will parishes bear the cost of maintenance? We should like to see one established in the Weavers' Park, as it is frequently called, at Mile End, where it would form a place of instructive recreation for a crowded, hard-working population, who at present are ill provided with pleasurable resources. Out of this arises the further question of accommodation for the national pictures, and the Royal Academy, and the arrangements to be taken at the British Museum, where the fast-increasing library necessitates an extension of book-shelves. The new Reading-room, spacious though it be, is already too straitened for the throng of readers. Some are of opinion that persons engaged in literature, scientific inquirers, and students only, should be admitted; and that persons who wish merely to read novels and amusing books, should seek them elsewhere. At present, Mr Panizzi, the chief-librarian, is bound to grant a ticket of admission to any respectable householder who applies for one; and instances of the abuse of the privilege are numerous. For example, an ironmonger having procured tickets for a couple of 'readers,' these individuals take their seats in the room, call for a Directory, and from that address a heap of tradesman's circulars—a proceeding which can hardly be described as using the Reading-room for purposes of study or scientific research.

Before this article appears in print, the parliamentary question concerning the paper-duty will doubtless be settled. The English manufacturer is uneasy at the prospect of free paper and taxed rags. Meanwhile,

there is a cry for fibres. Fortune waits for him who shall appear with available fibres; and literature, commerce, and art will be benefited. The Company formed to procure cotton, flax, hemp, and jute from India, have had an interview with Sir Charles Wood, and laid specimens before him of fibrous materials, which are useful in the manufacture of silk and woollen cloths as well as paper. The rheea of Assam and the Neigherry nettle are said to be the most suitable for the purpose, and producible in any quantity however large. The Industrial Society of Mulshouse offer a prize for specimens of paper-pulp equal to that made from rags.

Antiquaries have long referred with admiration to the cloaca maxima of ancient Rome; they have now the opportunity to see the cloaca maxima of modern London, which opens upon the meadows of the Lea, not far from the scene of Alfred's capture of the Danish fleet. It is the outlet of the northern division of metropolitan drainage—a mighty work, which makes satisfactory progress. Never has London been so much cut up with excavations as now, or with so much display of mechanical ingenuity in clearing out unusually deep trenches. The underground railway from Paddington to Farringdon Street is also progressing, and by and by, passengers will be travelling beneath the sewers. The new bridge at Westminster, a specimen of diligent building, will be, when complete, 'in keeping' with the Houses of Parliament, and a grand ornament to the court-end of town. It is to have a rival not far off, for the Charing Cross suspension-bridge is to be replaced by a railway-bridge wide enough for seven lines of rails and footways for pedestrians, and will carry the South Eastern Railway across the river to a terminus on the site of Hungerford Market.

A patented invention has been exhibited to the Franklin Institute at Philadelphia, which, if reported on favourably by their committee, will henceforth have to be taken into consideration in most operations requiring jointed tubes and pipes. It is observable how often long lengths of pipes used for the passage of steam or water become leaky, and the practice of stopping with lead becomes in many instances an obstruction of the bore. The invention in question, which is described as a *self-tightening joint for tubes and pipes*, obviates the faults hitherto complained of, by a coupling which is not affected by temperature, or by rough usage, which needs no stuffing or tool to fit it together, and is neater in appearance and cheaper than any other. The attachment is made or unmade by pressure of the thumb and finger, even should the tube be frozen full of ice. With this coupling, pipes may be laid down in the streets in any weather, and as rapidly as the trenches are dug. It will be highly serviceable in the joints of flexible tubes used for irrigation and in water-supply; while for fire-hose, the inventor has devised a self-acting coupling which fits the tighter the more the water presses inside.

Another example of American ingenuity is a 'burglar's alarm,' with which is combined a galvanometer to indicate the particular spot where the thief is making his attack, and a contrivance to ring a bell. Another is a machine for printing the addresses on newspapers: the papers, when folded and banded, are flung into a hopper, from which they pass to the types, and travel forth properly directed, by the movement of an endless band. Another is a plantarium, or glazed plant-case, to which access is easy

from the top or back, while superabundant moisture is permitted to escape, and the whole is so constructed as to be extensible at pleasure. To enable the plants to survive the severe winters of the States, the case rests on a tank which may be filled with hot water at night or kept warm by a spirit-lamp.

Mr Fairbairn is now adding to his valuable experiments on the density of steam and the resistance offered by boiler-plates and boiler-tubes, a series of tests of the law of expansion of superheated steam. In another quarter we hear of a different kind of experiments intended to produce combinations of coal-tar with superheated steam, and thereby to manufacture gas which shall be available for all purposes of illumination, and contain none of the disagreeable products of the gas now in use.—Dr Guy, of King's College, has read a paper before the Society of Arts on a newly constructed lens for microscopic observation, to be handed round in a class-room during a lecture, and on a number of highly ingenious contrivances which all who work with the microscope will do well to take into consideration. Another communication made to the same Society shews how forgery may be prevented by a peculiar quality of paper and ink therein described.—Mr Faraday's lecture on pharology, or the science of light-houses, has attracted attention on both sides the Channel, seeing that it treated of the magneto-electric light, which is superior to all other electric lights hitherto invented. For six months past, an experimental light of this description has been displayed at the North Foreland, whence it sends its beam far into France, and as Mr Faraday shewed by aid of a cloud of steam, pierces a fog in which an ordinary light would be totally invisible. Hence the magneto-electric is the very light for the fickle atmosphere of coasts; but there are questions of cost and mechanical arrangement to be settled before it can be generally adopted. A company in France—L'Alliance—state that they have overcome the question of cost and of mechanism, and are seeking for a method of producing carbon cylinders which shall be at once homogeneous and good conductors; which, having accomplished, they will be ready to treat with the imperial government for the establishment of the magneto-electric light in the light-houses of France.

Signor Parvesi of Turin makes known another application of charcoal likely to be useful in pharmacy. Dealers in drugs know that castor-oil, if kept too long, will turn rancid; the remedy is to mix it with animal charcoal and a small quantity of calcined magnesia, and keep it for three days in a temperature of from sixty-eight to seventy-eight degrees, when the oil on filtering off is found to be in all respects better than the best of the freshly-made.—Dr Anselmier has presented a paper to the Academy of Sciences at Paris on what he calls *Artificial Autophagy*—that is, a way by which mariners and others, when deprived of food, may keep themselves alive for a long time by opening a vein, and drinking small quantities of their own blood at periodical intervals; which seems something like applying the theory of perpetual motion as a preventive of starvation. Professor Du Bois Reymond of Berlin, pursuing his researches in physiological chemistry, shews that the acid which is said to be generated in living muscle is in reality a result of death, not of vital action; and further, that the fluid which appears as acid on a transverse section of the muscle, is found to be alkaline when the section is longitudinal.—Dr Theophilus Thompson, whose paper on the effect of cod-liver oil in multiplying the red corpuscles of the blood, we noticed last year, has lately made a communication to the Medicochirurgical Society, on the medical administration of ozonised oils. The mode of preparation is to saturate the oils used in medicine—sunflower, cod-liver, &c.—with oxygen gas, and expose them for some days to the direct action of sunlight, when they may be used

as a remedy for consumption. Their effect is remarkable; the rapidity of the pulse is reduced, and by thus bringing back the circulation to its normal condition, an important advantage is gained over the malady, and the general health is improved.—M. Houzeau, professor of chemistry at Rouen, has set up a series of delicate instruments to test the air, and is able therewith to note the indications of atmospheric deterioration, and some of the phenomena that accompany epidemics. We hear, moreover, that he professes to extract the ozone from the pure air of the country, and carry it into the town, to renovate the atmosphere of factories and hospitals.—M. Paul Broca, a surgeon of Paris, has repeated the experiments made and described some time ago by Dr Braid of Manchester, as hypnotism; in other words, catalepsy without inhalation. One result of the repetition is, that he finds hypnotism as effectual as chloroform in deadening sensation during surgical operations, having tried it in some very severe cases. It appears that the physiologists of France have only become aware of Dr Braid's experiments within the past few months: and M. Broca intends to devote himself to study all the possible applications of hypnotism as an anaesthetic agent.

Our brethren at the antipodes will now, in all probability, have their desire gratified as regards salmon, for a ship is on her way to Australia carrying thirty thousand salmon ova from a river in Wales. Care has been taken to preserve the natural condition as much as possible during the voyage; the eggs are placed in a cistern on a bed of gravel, and a stream of ice-cold water, to retard maturity, will flow continually across them till they arrive at their destination. This is a noteworthy example of involuntary migration, which some future colonial author, writing on the origin of species, will doubtless take into consideration.

In 'Notes on Californian Trees,' published in the *Edinburgh Philosophical Journal*, Mr Andrew Murray communicates interesting particulars concerning the *Wellingtonia gigantea*—the monster pine, one of which represented by 116 feet of its bark, has for some time past astonished visitors to the Crystal Palace. Seeds were wanted by British arboriculturists, and as the trees are too tall to be climbed, a young Irishman, expert with the rifle, was set to shoot down the cones. This kind of sport proving too slow, he, not having the fear of Judge Lynch before his eyes, cut down four of the smallest trees, and got 50,000 seeds, which were sent to this country. Hence we may look forward to seeing the giant growing in our parks and woodlands, and that at no distant date, for the tree is of rapid growth, though this takes place chiefly at night. There is a specimen near Cork already fourteen feet in height; and another in Norfolk has ripened its seed. How many an eventful page of history will have been written before they are 400 feet high! We are glad to hear that the United States authorities have taken measures to prevent any further destruction of the magnificent clump still left standing in California.

Meteorologists are collecting observations on our unusually backward spring, to compare with the records of past years, as a further help in examination of the question as to the weather-cycle theory. The same atmospheric condition appears to have prevailed over the whole of Europe, accompanied in several parts of the continent by combined thunder and snow storms. Of these the most remarkable occurred in Belgium on February 19, between seven and eight in the evening, when, besides an unprecedented fall of snow, twelve churches were simultaneously struck by lightning, at places wide apart—Liège, Courtrai, Malines, Antwerp—comprising nearly the whole breadth of the country. Some of the churches were completely destroyed, and the others more or less injured.

THE CHAFFINCH.

The winter wind howls back to northern seas,
And in his stead comes up the western breeze;
And budded leaves break freshly on the trees;
So, chaffinch, sing,

A happy, piping pipe, the world to please;
For this is Spring.

The youngling birds new in the nest are born;
And fresh with April rain springs up the corn;
White-breasted clouds arise to greet the morn;
So, chaffinch, sing,

And pipe thy song, and sit no more forlorn;
For this is Spring.

We cannot sing in winter, if we would,
As if the frosty time were fair and good;
But winter wind blows bleak by northern flood;
So, chaffinch, sing.

Blue-bells are on the hills, the May's a-bud;
For this is Spring.

The summer cuckoo comes to sing his best;
The swallow twits to find the ancient nest;
Black buds break on the ash, the beech is drest
In green; so, sing.

Bitter is turned to sweet, our hearts to rest;
For this is Spring.

The creasy brooks are purling in the meads;
The plover skims across the crested reeds;
The morning melts the amber-tinted beads
Of dew; so, sing.

And say the world no wrecks of winter heeds;
For this is Spring.

A sunny welcome o'er the land is sent;
The honey-flowers with early bees are bent;
New leafy boats the fairy fays invent,
To sail; so, sing.

Sunny the sunshine is, so rest content;
For this is Spring.

Take, chaffinch, take a novel plume, to keep
The festive season; plumage brown and deep,
With tips of blue; the morning air to sweep
More gay; so, sing.

And quickly wake the woods from winter sleep;
For this is Spring.

Spring, skipping gaily trim by dike and beck,
With wreathed wreaths of flowers herself to deck,
With lilies fresh hung round her crystal neck,
Comes quick; so, sing.

Thy glossy throat no taints of winter speck;
For this is Spring.

So pipe, so sing sweet lays, and let the note
Trill richly up the ruddy, speckless throat,
From hedgerows green, to fill the fields, and float
All day; so, sing.
And heal us, heal us all whom winter smote
With grief, ere Spring.

T. A.

A quack work of very low character is at present in the course of being advertised, with the following recommendation attached: 'This admirable book should be in every person's possession.' —CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL, Nov. 1859.

We have simply to state, that no such recommendation ever appeared in CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL, and that the book, from all we can hear of it, is one which should be in NOBODY'S possession.

EDINBURGH, March 26, 1860.

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